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## **Appendix F**

### **Literature Review: The Centre for Excellence for Black Student Success**

The topic of Black Cultural Centres in literature connects to Black students in colleges and universities. These accounts attempt to explore the intricacies of Black students' success within predominately white institutions (Patton, 2006; Stovall, 2006). Although the United States boasts most of the publications on this topic, Canadian institutions are beginning to develop and report on their own creations of Black Cultural Centres.

This literature review presents a brief account of the cornerstones of Black Cultural Centres within education. These cornerstones form the foundation for the proposed creation of a Centre for Excellence for Black Student Success within the Toronto District School Board. This literature review therefore showcases that the development of such a Centre will provide Black students with safe spaces to share and develop cultural knowledge; cultivate a sense of belonging; gain leadership experiences; access community resources and increase their positive racial identity (Patton, 2006; Richmond, 2012 ).

#### **Safe spaces to share and develop cultural knowledge**

Research has shown that Black Cultural Centres provides numerous benefits for Black students including providing safe spaces to share and develop cultural knowledge. Black students require safe spaces to support them as they negotiate within predominately white institutions where they are often found balancing acts of discrimination, feelings of isolation and overt racism (Patton, 2006, p.3). A common misconception tied to safe spaces that specifically focus on Black students and communities is that they foster separatism and self-segregation. However, Patton (2006) reminds us that Black students require a space for their own well-being as they are commonly asked to “operate outside of their comfort zone everyday” (p.5).

#### **Cultivate a sense of Belonging and increase Positive racial identity**

For academic success, Black students must feel that they belong to the classroom and school environment. They must believe that there is a caring adult – a role model that truly has high expectations and is willing to provide opportunities for them to develop a positive racial and achievement identity as learners (TDSB Research Dept., 2018). While most TDSB students that identify as Black are born in Canada (approximately 77%), the Black student population has diverse family/cultural backgrounds that span large regions of the Caribbean, *West Africa, East Africa, and Canada (TDSB, 2011)*. It is important that we recognize there is not a monolithic identity of who identifies as Black and why they require a centralized space. Black Cultural Centres provide students with a sense of connection to their identities and to real world understandings by providing authentic access to cultural resources and community agencies and experiences (Patton, 2006).

#### **Gain leadership experiences and Access Community resources**

Research also suggests that there is a need to cultivate agency, leadership and racial consciousness in Black students so that they can make the connections between what they are

learning and the real world. Black students have stated in all the current research that they require the space and opportunities to talk about race and racism so that they can learn to navigate issues of injustice when they arise (TDSB Research Dept., 2018). When looking at leadership development, Patton (2006, 2008) found that student participation at the Black Cultural Centres was the reason for many students becoming involved in school activities and leadership opportunities, thus impacting their social and relational growth (28).

Much of the literature on Black Cultural Centres speaks to the need for structures to support the work of increasing achievement for Black students and ensuring their overall well-being. TDSB's Centre for Excellence for Black Students will offer access to engage in proactive and responsive change.

## References

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